

BIOSOLIDS COMPLAINT

County: Sussex

Date of Complaint: February 17, 2005

Location: on Rt. 610, Harrell Road and Millstone Lane near Harrells Pond.

Nature of Complaint: Excessive odors from land application of biosolids in the area, no incorporation within 48 hours on fields with less than 60% vegetative cover and some tracking on roadways.

Investigated By: Cal Sawyer, Director, Division of Wastewater Engineering

Summary of Investigation: Cal Sawyer contacted Mr. Steve McMahon, Synagro's Technical Manager to confirm that they were working in the vicinity of the complaint. Mr. McMahon contacted Mr. Marshall Puryear who then called and confirmed that they were working in the Harrell Road (Rt 610) area on Old Hickory Farm in that vicinity (VDHBUR 121, Booklet SX-05, Fields 98 through 107). Synagro was applying biosolids from the DCWASA Blue Plains Treatment works. The sites were harvested cotton crop fields and Mr. Puryear agreed to check the percent vegetative cover. Mr. Puryear subsequently called to confirm that his measurements indicated that more than 65 % cover existed on the sites in question. The sites had not been incorporated within 48 hours simply due to wet weather conditions that developed. Mr. Puryear also confirmed that some road tracking from transport vehicles had occurred due to wet soils, but that crews were working to remove as much of the material from the roads as possible.

Old Hickory Farm Field 102 (13 acres) is located on Millstone Lane and Harrells Road and is the closest field to the complainant. This field had Blue Plains lime stabilized biosolids applied to it. The complainant called again on February 20, 2005, to report that the field had not been incorporated and biosolids had been applied there on February 16th. In addition the field continued to have strong biosolids odors and that a family member had experienced illness when driving by the field. The weather had been damp and probably contributed to the continued odors. It is likely that rainy weather had strengthened the odors. However, Cal Sawyer requested that Mr. McMahon contact the Maryland Environmental Service (MES) inspectors who had been present during the land application operations and ask that they contact the Division of Wastewater Engineering. Mr. Puryear also called later on February 20th to report that the biosolids applied to field 102 had been incorporated. Cal Sawyer received calls from Mr. Pete Kilgore and Mr. Carl Burton with MES, who both reported that all pH checks of the Blue Plains biosolids indicated a value of 12 or more during operations along Harrell Road. However, Mr. Burton reported that moderate to strong odors were present during operations on February 16th and 17th. He attributed the odors to a recent switch to use of calcium lime for biosolids treatment at the Blue Plains Facility and noted that the problem seemed to be associated with biosolids removed from Bunker number 3 at the facility. He reported that biosolids odors had dropped to a minimal level during the following week.

The complainant was informed that the applied biosolids had been incorporated.

